

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02759 01 OF 02 031134Z

53

ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 AID-05 OIC-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01

IGA-01 /097 W

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R 030756Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3135

INFO AMEMBASSY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USUN MISSION NEW YORK 2830

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UNN

AMEMBASSY AMMAN UNN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO UNN

AMEMBASSY DOHA UNN

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD UNN

AMEMBASSY MANAMA UNN

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT UNN

AMEMBASSY SAANA UNN

USMISSION GENEVA

USUNIDO VIENNA UNN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 2759/1

NEW DELHI FOR AMBASSADOR FERGUSON AND MR. STOKES (ESCAP)

ALSO FOR TREASURY (PARSKY)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECWA, UN, XF

SUBJECT: ECWA PLENARY, AL-ATTAR ON USG

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02759 01 OF 02 031134Z

REF: BEIRUT 631 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN RECENT TALKS WITH TWO US AMBASSADORS, ECWA CHIEF AL-ATTAR DISPLAYED MARKED WARMING TOWARD USG, REQUESTING GENERALIZED USG SUPPORT FOR ECWA AND SPECIFICALLY INQUIRING ABOUT ASSISTANCE (ON A REIMBURSABLE BASIS) IN CURRENT ECWA REGIONAL WATER AND SIMILAR STUDIES. HE ALSO SAID FORMAL AGENDA FOR SECOND ECWA PLENARY HERE APRIL 21 MAY BE LATE AGAIN BUT INDICATED MAJOR ITEMS WILL AGAIN BE PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS CITY AND POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR ECWA MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION BY PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN, EGYPT, ALGERIA, MOROCCO AND TUNISIA. AL-ATTAR PROVIDED ENOUGH TO PERMIT START ON USG POSITION PAPERS ON MAJOR ITEMS WITHOUT AWAITING AGENDA, COMMENCING WITH SIZE, COMPOSITION AND ACTIVITIES OF USG DELEGATION TO APRIL 21 PLENARY.

1. BY COINCIDENCE, AMBASSADORS MURPHY (TO SYRIA) AND FERGUSON (USUN) HAD SUCCESSIVE TALKS WITH DR. MOHAMED SAID AL-ATTAR, YEMENI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF 14-MONTH-OLD UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ECWA) TO RENEW ACQUAINTANCE FROM AL-ATTAR'S DAYS AS NORTH YEMEN AMBASSADOR TO UN. AMBASSADOR MURPHY VISITED AL-ATTAR'S OFFICE FEBRUARY 21, AMBASSADOR FERGUSON HAD WORKING LUNCH AT ECON COUNSELOR'S HOME FEBRUARY 24. AL-ATTAR GREETED BOTH WARMLY AND TALKED FRANKLY AND AT LENGTH OF HIS EFFORTS TO DATE TO REORGANIZE ECWA INTO "DYNAMIC" REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CATALYST, OVERCOME UN HEADQUARTERS INERTIA AND MINIMIZE DUPLICATION OF EFFORT IN FIELD BY UN AGENCIES. IT OBVIOUS THAT FOR AL-ATTAR, AND THEREFORE FOR MOST STAFF MEMBERS, ANY LINGERING SUSPICION OR RESENTMENT OVER STRONG USG OPPOSITION IN 1973 TO ECWA'S CREATION EXCLUDING ISRAEL IS MOSTLY GONE. HOWEVER, HE DID REPEAT LAST YEAR'S INSTRUCTION THAT EMBASSY LIAISON OFFICER TO ECWA CHECK WITH AL-ATTAR BEFORE CONTRACTING ECWA STAFF MEMBERS, INSTRUCTION WHICH WE HAVE OBSERVED FITFULLY (AL-ATTAR IS FREQUENTLY TRAVELING) BUT WHICH TENDS TO HAMPER CONTACTS.

2. VISITS PROVIDED BEST OPPORTUNITY TO DATE FOR EXTENDED DIALOGUE WITH AL-ATTAR. HE SEVERAL TIMES URGED USG "SUPPORT" OF ECWA, NOTING REPROACHFULLY THAT USG FAILED "SUPPORT" ECWA'S ANNUAL REPORT AT ECOSO C LAST SUMMER (WE POINTED OUT REPORT UNAVAILABLE UNTIL LATE IN ECOSOC SESSION). BY SUPPORT, HE SEEMS TO DESIRE SOME PUBLIC USG ENDORSEMENT OF ECWA AND ITS OBJECTIVES, POSSIBLY INTERPRETING ABSENCE OF CONFIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02759 01 OF 02 031134Z

UN-TYPE PLATITUDES FROM USG AS LACK OF SUPPORT. IN RESPONSE DIRECT QUESTION FROM ECON COUNSELOR, AL-ATTAR SAID USG STATEMENT DURING ECWA PLENARY WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE UNWELCOME BY MOST DELGATIONS, ALTHOUGH HE UNSURE OF IRAQIS.

3. AL-ATTAR SAID CONCRETE USG CONTRIBUTIONS TO ECWA STUDIES IN NON-SENSITIVE FIELD WOULD BE WELCOME. PETROLEUM TOO SENSITIVE BUT HE SPECIFICALLY SAID ECWA COULD MAKE IMMEDIATE USE OF 4-5 US WATER EXPERTS, AYING ECWA STARTING REGIONAL WATER STUDIES FROM SCRATCH AND REGION ENTIRELY LACKING IN DATA ON POTENTIAL UNDERGROUND WATER,

RIVERS AND DESALINIZATION PROBLEMS. HE STRESSED THIS WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE AT USG EXPENSE, CLAIMING SAUDIS PREPARED PUT UP \$10 MILLION FOR WATER STUDIES, BUT IT UNCLEAR WHETHER ECWA WOULD PAY ALL OR PARTIAL COST. AL-ATTAR MENTIONED SATELLITE DATE AS ANOTHER POTENTIAL US CONTRIBUTION THIS FIELD AND ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE ANOTHER POSSIBILITY. HE WANTS US EXPERTS AT LEAST IN PART BECAUSE, HE SAID, IT TAKES EIGHT MONTHS TO OBTAIN EXPERTS FROM UN NEW YORK.

4. REGARDING APRIL 21 PLENARY, AL-ATTAR BEMOANED NEED TO RELY ON NEW YORK FOR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT. HE SAID NEW YORK MAY NOT ISSUED FORMAL AGENDA IN TIME COMPLY WITH RULE REQUIRING SIX-WEEK NOTICE TO DELEGATIONS, I.E., MARCH 10. ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES HE INDICATED MAIN ITEMS WILL BE:

(A) PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS CITY. AS REPORTED OUR 10955 AND EARLIER, BEIRUT IN COMPROMISE OF LAST PLENARY'S STALEMATE IS PROVISIONAL SEAT THROUGH 1979. BEIRUT OBVIOUS PREFERENCE OF ECWA STAFF AND AL-ATTAR SAID IT ONLY SITE ACCEPTABLE TO POTENTIAL WESTERN EXPERTISE BUT HE INDICATED GOL HAS NOT RPT NOT YET COMMITTED ITSELF TO WHAT HE CONSIDERS WINNING BID. HE SAID FIANAL DECISION MAY BE NECESSARY THIS PLENARY (WE UNDERSTOOD DEADLINE TO BE APRIL 1976) AND IS CONCERNED BEIRUT MAY BE OUTBID BY IRAQIS, WHO HE CLAIMS PREPARED OFFER \$25 MILLION FOR BAGHDAD, OR BY DAMASCUS, WHICH HE SAID IS BACKED BY SAUDIS RPT SAUDIS.

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02759 02 OF 02 031210Z

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 AID-05 OIC-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01

IGA-01 /097 W

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R 030756Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3136

INFO AMEMBASSY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USUN MISSION NEW YORK 2831
ZNE/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UNN
AMEMBASSY AMMAN UNN
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO UNN
AMEMBASSY DOHA UNN
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD UNN
AMEMBASSY MANAMA UNN
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT UNN
AMEMBASSY SAANA UNN
USMISSION GENEVA
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 2759

NEW DELHI FOR AMBASSADOR FERGUSON AND MR. STOKES (ESCAP)

ALSO FOR TREASURY (PARSKY)

(B) NEW MEMBERS OR ASSOCIATES. AL-ATTAR SAID PAKISTAN LIKELY RENEW APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP, AFGHANISTAN MAY APPLY, EGYPT CANVASSING SUPPORT BUT MAY BE BLOCKED BY SAUDIS RPT SAUDIS AND ALGERIA,

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02759 02 OF 02 031210Z

MOROCCO AND TUNISIA RIUDYZE FOR MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION. NO EXPLANATION WHY SAUDIS WOULD BLOCK EGYPT BUT WE GAINED IMPRESSION AL-ATTAR THINKS PRESENT ECWA MEMBERSHIP---12 ARAB COUNTRIES EAST OF EGYPT---NOT RPT NOT YET READY FOR NEW MEMBERS.

5. REGARDING SAUDI ATTITUDE TOWARD ECWA, AL-ATTAR SAID HE HAD (FINALLY) BEEN RECEIVED BY KING FAISAL, APPARENTLY IN JANUARY, AND WAS TREATED NORMALLY. CLAIMED KING PREPARED GIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ECWA PROJECTS.

6. ON ORGANIZATION, AL-ATTAR SAID ECWA NOW HAS 70 PROFESSIONALS AND ABOUT 120 STAFF IN EIGHT DIVISIONS. THERE SIX AMERICAN PROFESSIONALS, NO RUSSIANS YET BUT HE SAID HE MAY HAVE TO TAKE ONE UNDER CONTINUED SOVIET EMBASSY URGING. A PRACTICAL PROBLEM RREGARDING COMMUNIST BLOC STAFFERS, HE SAID, IS THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND GULD STATES WILL NOT ADMIT THEM. ECWA HAS ALSO FORMED JOINT DIVISIONS WITH FAO, UNIDO AND UNEP AND RECENTLY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE FORM WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ARAB FUND FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND UAE FUND WITH APPARENT OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO THEM. GENERALLY SPEAKING, AL-ATTAR SAID PROGRAM FINANCING NO PROBLEM NOW, ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS STILL ARE. AS YET, THOUGH, ECWA HAS NO ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORY OR PHONE BOOK.

7. WE UNLIKELY OBTAIN MUCH MORE INFO THAN ABOVE BEFORE PLENARY STARTS. THEREFORE SUGGEST DEPARTMENT BEGIN CONSIDERING POSITION ON MAJOR POINTS, AMONG WHICH WE SEE:

(A) SIZE, COMPOSITION AND ACTIVITIES USG DELEGATION TO PLENARY. AL-ATTAR AWARE THAT ECWA'S UNIQUE LAST-MINUTE INVITATION FORMALITY CREATES PLANNING PROBLEMS, SAYS HE HOPES SET UP SOME SORT OF ADVANCE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE TO ELIMINATE UNCERTAINTY. HE OBVIOUSLY HOPES FOR AMBASSADORIAL REPRESENTATION FROM USG PLUS A PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT. ON MORE PRACTICAL PLAN, WE MUST MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS SOON (CAN ALWAYS CANCEL THEM IF NECESSARY) SO WOULD APPRECIATE SOME GUIDANCE FOR THIS PURPOSE VERY SOON. PLENARY IS AT PHOENICIA HOTEL AND WE WOULD BOOK THERE.

(B) PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS SITE---DO WE HAVE ANY PREFERENCE?

(C) NEW MEMBERS OF ASSOCIATES-- ANY VIEWS ON POSSIBILITIES
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02759 02 OF 02 031210Z

LISTED PLUS SUCH DARK HORSES AS IRAN, SUDAN, LIBYA OR SAHEL COUNTRIES?

(D) USG PROGRAM ASSISTANCE TO ECWA---DO WE WIDH PROVIDE WATER OR OTHER EXPERTS ECWA MAY REQUEST? ANY OFF-THE-SHELF EARTH SATELLITE DATA AVAILABLE? THIS WOULD OF COURSE REQUIRE MORE INVESTIGATION AND FORMAL ECWA REQUEST. EPARTMENT MAY WISH REVIEW ACTIVITIES OUR JOINT COMMISSIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA FOR POSSIBILITIES OF SPIN-OFF BENEFITS OR CONFLICTS.

8. FOR NEW DELHI: IF FEASIBLE, WOULD APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS ABOVE HERE WITH MR. STOKES DURING HIS RETURN WASHINGTON. STOKES VISIT TO ECWA WOULD BE USEFUL.
HOUGHTON

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Message Attributes

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